

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 6, 2013
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of February 6, 2013 was called to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioner (C) Block, Eric Sullivan, Bortoli, Vice Chair Wright, Youth Commissioner (YC) Bartee, C Wong and Chair Kevin Sullivan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: YC Zakeri

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Recreation Manager (RM) Brunson, Intern (I) Detzaira Walsh

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Meeting of December 5, 2012

C Wright moved, seconded by C Bortoli, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 5, 2012. Vote 7-0 in favor.

b. Meeting of January 9, 2013

C Bortoli moved, seconded by C Wong, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 9, 2013. Vote 6-0 in favor, C Eric Sullivan abstained.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Board Meeting. They had a presentation from HIP (Human Investment Project) Housing, a home share program that is used by seniors. The Senior Lunch Program is going well and is well attended. A safe driving program put on by the CHP was held. Tax Assistance will be available free of charge for low income individuals.

C Wong reported that he and C Bortoli and PRD Gervais attended a McDougal Park Neighborhood meeting with local neighbors and a representative from the Charles Armstrong School. There was discussion on the organized sports groups, excessive noise, and possibly non-Belmont sports group's usage. There were requests to have some holidays left open for the neighborhood's use and that the gate access is left open for them when they have neighborhood events. They also discussed a renovation/redesign for McDougal Park. It was suggested that they survey the neighborhood to find out their wishes, confer with Charles Armstrong School and then bring this back to the Parks & Recreation Department for further discussion.

C Wright stated she attended the City Council meeting on January 22, 2013 and reported that Council was in favor of the new design for Davey Glen Park.

CC Kevin Sullivan reported on the progress of the Lake Loop Trail at Water Dog Lake.

PRD Gervais reported on the following:

- The sold out Father Daughter Dance on February 8
- NDNU Call to Action Day on March 21
- Earth Day events on April 20
- Possible Rebuilding Together project at Barrett Community Center on April 27
- Partnership Day with Safe Routes to School, the Belmont 4-H and the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District to promote bike use and safety on May 4
- Streets Alive will be on Sunday, May 5 with presence at the Farmer's Market

RM Manager Brunson announced Opening Day Ceremonies would be held on Friday, March 1 @ 6:00 PM for Belmont/Redwood Shores Youth Softball Association and Saturday, March 9 at 8:30 AM for Belmont/Redwood Shores Little League.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion of Recreation Programming for the City of Belmont

PRD Gervais reviewed the programs the Recreation Division offers to the community:

- Recreation Classes
 - Enrollments have increased
 - Increase in partnerships
 - Summer Programs – Aquatics and Camps
 - Events – Father/Daughter Dance, Egg Adventure Hunt
- Senior Services
 - Socialization
 - Transportation to Center
 - Lunch Program
 - Trips
 - Health & Exercise
 - Language Groups
 - Holiday & Birthday Celebrations
- Youth Sports
 - Provide Field Space
 - Joint Use Agreement with School District

- Manage Field Scheduling
- Regulate reservation times
- Community Learning Center
 - 75 children enrolled, 90% Belmont residents
 - PTO raised \$10,000+ for school
 - Future
 - Better fiscal results
 - Possibly reduce number of student, increase full-time
- Recreation Facilities
 - Robust rental program
 - \$400,000+ revenue in 2012
 - Governed by Facility Use Policy
 - Home for community groups and government agencies
 - Goal to reach \$500,000 in revenue
 - Addition of Manor House
 - Increase Picnic Area Reservations

PRD Gervais reviewed the revenue and expenditures for the Recreation Division. He noted the revenue provides a 75% return of the expenditures. Some programs, such as Senior Services, are not meant to generate much revenue. Department's goal is to increase enrollments and revenue. RM Brunson added that the Department has met their cap number for support set by the City Council for the past two years.

PRD Gervais and RM Brunson responded to questions from the Commission.

- Decrease in expenditures from 2010-2011 was due to budget reductions. Some special events were eliminated and staff hours were reduced. Increase in revenue was due to increased marketing and partnerships.
- Changes at Barrett have not had an impact on the Community Learning Center. This program does need to be reviewed for the long term. The goal has been to get the program fiscally sound. Reducing the number of participants may be considered. The Center is state licensed which requires a ratio of 1-12 and offering part-time care increases the need for staffing.
- An anticipated trend in Recreation is Health & Wellness. Partnerships assist the Department in offering programs. New sports that are growing in popularity are Lacrosse and Cricket.
- Churches rent facilities to hold their services and special events.
- Neighboring cities also have limited field space.
- An enhancement for data on seniors is needed as a lot of grant applications require this information.
- Analysis has not been completed on events and programs to determine which ones are eliminated. Data on recreation programs is available through the online registration

program. There is effort to reduce the number of classes that are canceled. Events are determined by participation. Many large events in other cities are put on by the Chamber of Commerce but there is a lack of commercial presence in Belmont to put on these events. The City is able to serve as a facilitator for large events but does not have the capacity to put them on. The City is able to put on small scale successful events such as the Father-Daughter Dance and the Egg Adventure Hunt. More events can be offered when other organizations participate.

- The projects at Ralston and Fox Schools forced more field activity to the Sports Complex and the sports groups worked on maximizing their field time. Challenges will continue this summer as the parking lots will not be available due to construction.
- There have been discussions on the damage to the Barrett field and the soccer groups will paint their lines next year.
- State Licensed day care programs ratios are 1-12. If not state-licensed the hours are limited and the ratios are not mandated. The City eliminated day care for under 2 ½ year olds as the ratio requirement is 1-6.

C Wright suggested considering charging additional fees at the Preschool for children that are still in diapers.

C Bortoli noted that seniors may be reluctant to provide information for data collection and he suggested that the reasons be explained to them on why the statistics are needed.

C Bortoli expressed concern on the condition of the fields during the school construction projects and the access needed so maintenance can be done. RM Brunson said he has scheduled a meeting with the Project Manager to work out a plan.

C Eric Sullivan stated the increase in revenue was commendable considering the recession and hopes it continues as the economy improves.

C Block noted that programs are reaching more of the community but he would like more outreach to groups that may be missing. C Wright added there is a program in San Mateo County called Thrive, an alliance of non-profits, and it might be worthwhile to go to a meeting to find potential partners.

CC Kevin Sullivan expressed appreciation for staff efforts and he stated he has noticed an increase in communication and promotion from the department.

CC Kevin Sullivan stated he would like to have more specific conversations on the Community Learning Center. He has had the opinion that it is an expense that the City should not bear noting that there are other options available for child care.

C Wong spoke in support of Health and Wellness programs and suggested staff looks for more grant opportunities.

b. Discussion and Direction on the future of the Belmont Manor House in Twin Pines Park

PRD Gervais reported that the Peninsula Museum of Art is moving to Burlingame along with some artists from the Manor House and 1870 Art Center. This provides an opportunity for the City to reclaim the facility. Photos of the interior rooms and exterior of the Manor Building were shown.

PRD Gervais explained some of the ideas for the Manor House including blocking off the carport to create more public space in front of the building and bringing history out of the back room integrating it throughout the entire facility. The goal is to make it a Visitor Center and offer tours of the building. Volunteers could lead the tours and be docents of the building.

The Manor House can also be used for community rentals. Staff provided some proposed rental rates and cost comparable for other facilities. One idea is to provide a campus rental which would include the Manor House, Lodge, Cottage and Twin Pines Senior/Community Center.

PRD Gervais noted that there is not a real kitchen in the facility but there is a small preparation room. He explained the layout and the additions that were made to building. The City made upgrades to the facility in 2008.

PRD Gervais said that the upstairs studios are rented by artists. These artists have been paying rent to the Peninsula Museum of Art who paid the rent to the City. At this time there are no plans to change this other than the City will collect rent directly from the artists. Long term question is what will be done with these studios. Questions raised include should Belmont residents get priority, should residents and non-residents be charged different rates, and should non-related art uses be allowed in the building.

PRD Gervais explained the building signage will be changed and could include Belmont Manor House, Visitor Center, Historical Society, Artist's Studios, and Available for Events.

Proposed improvements for the building are refinishing of the floors, working on fire alarm system and opening up the main gallery windows and putting some natural light into it.

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions:

- ADA Compliance would be cost prohibitive for second floor access.
- The building is believed to have structural integrity but staff will check if that has been evaluated.
- Staff will check if the lighting is adequate for an evening event.
- Installing a kitchen would be too costly and maintenance of it would be a challenge.
- Cost estimates for opening up windows in the gallery is still to be determined.
- The rental cost comparison of the other facilities included two east bay locations.
- City staff is not available to staff the building; volunteers may be coordinated through the Senior Center.
- Reopening windows in gallery might allow sunlight to damage art; lighting could be evaluated.

- Parking would be available in Twin Pines Park and City Hall lots. Communication to rental groups on available parking could be improved.
- There are eleven art studios upstairs and three artists are expected to vacate. Staff will check if the other artists have been long term tenants.
- History on the Manor Building could be included in the historical displays.
- Alcohol permit fees are based on size of events.
- Providing different rental options and rates based on number of rooms used could be considered.
- Interior designers have not been brought in to recommend how the facility could be used.
- Period pieces could be considered but there would be concern of potential damage occurring with rentals.
- Unifying the landscaping on the park campus is needed but that would be a different and larger project.

C Block suggested the City hosts monthly events showcasing local talent such as book or poetry readings. He noted this could increase awareness of the facility.

C Eric Sullivan suggested changing the front of the building into a standing patio area to open up the front façade. He agreed with C Block's suggestions and he also agreed with bringing out local history items into the building. He proposed the idea that Belmont community artists being part of it and having exhibits rotate periodically. \

C Bortoli expressed a preference for artist studios to be first-come, first-served and that fees be the same for residents and non-residents. He did not think it would be a good idea to use as office space unless all were used as office space and that using the studios for office space may raise security concerns. He noted that historical items are not valuable, but invaluable and cannot be replaced. He expressed concern that kitchen work could become costly as there could be some code issues. C Bortoli commented that during the Centennial Celebration he had not heard the building referred to as Belmont Manor House but Manor House or Twin Pines Manor House.

C Wright suggested the building sign list History Museum instead of Historical Society. She also suggested that the signage at the park entrance have something integrated so that people could place a temporary sign into it. She spoke in favor of having an expert give suggestions on displaying the historical artifacts. She noted that pieces could be secured in the glass cases and larger framed items would be difficult to remove. C Wright proposed an idea of having an area for people to come in and use the space to work on their laptops or book reading. Having people around the building would make security less of a problem. She also mentioned a concept of having a space where people can go and use a desk to work at and those in the same industry could work separately but in the same environment. She suggested having children be docents and provide tours to visitors.

PRD Gervais said that these were great ideas but it would require a partner to accomplish them. A non-profit organization could be given free office space to run these programs.

C Wright commented that she was in favor of opening the windows and that special glass could be used to protect the art work.

C Wong stated the building needs some outdoor illumination. He agreed with adding an outdoor space on the side of the building. He noted this building offers an intimate setting and would be suitable for a jazz night or trio. He proposed naming the rooms. He suggested that the historical artifacts be rotated in other city facilities as well as the Manor House.

CC Kevin Sullivan said the focuses should be to bring more people into the facility and to generate revenue. He agreed some type of kitchen is needed and suggested having a caterer provide input on what is needed for a preparation area. CC Kevin Sullivan said it makes sense for the building to remain closed when not in use for tours or rentals. He agreed with upgrading the front of the building and opening up the windows in the gallery. He expressed his opinion that artists upstairs should pay market rate for the studios unless they are doing something for the community. He noted that having business offices upstairs would be problematic due to ADA requirements. Renting to others tenants that do not have customers could be considered.

C Bortoli expressed concern with rent checks being turned in to volunteers. He added that he would not be in favor of changing the building when making improvements to the front of it and if a low wall is installed it look like the building décor. He also suggested that the current uses of the rooms could provide names for them.

C Eric Sullivan stated a preference for residents being charged lower rental rates. He suggested having student art projects displayed at the Manor to bring more visitors. He agreed small music performances would be a good idea.

CC Kevin Sullivan suggested having some senior programs held in the Manor House. PRD Gervais agreed and also having the Holiday Craft Faire vendors expand into it.

PRD Gervais thanked the Commission for their thoughts and said staff will keep reporting on the progress and bring in back to the Commission when decisions are needed.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- The Davey Glen Park Project presentation to City Council was successful. Staff will meet with the Landscape Architect to plan the next steps. There were some preliminary discussion with Public Works about adding a detention basin to store storm water and pursuing a grant for it.
- The Mediterranean color theme was selected for the Senior/Community Center project.
- Staff is moving ahead with the spillway bridge for Water Dog Lake.

B. Future Agenda Items

Update on signage for Open Space areas
San Juan Canyon

Belmont Sports Complex Synthetic Turf Project
Survey Results

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director